

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MAY 29, 1848.

Submitted, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. YULEE made the following

REPORT:

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the petition of John Ericsson, report:

The petitioner makes a claim for a large amount, to wit, fifteen thousand and eighty dollars, for sundry services which he alleges to have rendered in the construction of the steamer Princeton and her engine. It appears that Mr. Ericsson was not employed to render any service, but was "permitted, as a particular act of favor and kindness, to superintend the construction of the machinery of the Princeton," in the success of which the petitioner had a deep interest. The facts stated in the subjoined letter from Captain R. F. Stockton to the Navy Department, deprive the claim of the petitioner of all shadow of propriety. The Secretary of the Navy decided against the claim of Mr. Ericsson, and the committee find no reasonable ground for interposing to disturb that decision.

PRINCETON, May 20, 1844.

SIR: In answer to your last communication of the tenth instant, on the subject of Captain Ericsson's accounts, a copy of which had been previously sent to me by the Department, and which I could not approve, I have the honor further to state:

That it has given me great pleasure to acknowledge, upon all proper occasions, the services of Captain Ericsson's mechanical skill in carrying out my well intended efforts for the benefit of the country. And although I am still free to do so, yet my duty to the government, and not more than a proper regard for myself, require me to say, that I was quite surprised to learn that he had presented any *claim* or *demand whatever* against the department for services rendered to me in fitting the Princeton; nor was my

surprise at all diminished, on a perusal of his accounts, to find that he had been so extravagant in all his demands.

That the government may have a proper understanding of the true position of Captain Ericsson towards the government and myself in regard to any demand he has made or may see fit to make for the services before alluded to, however *eminent and laborious they may turn out to be*, it seems to be proper here to state some of the circumstances connected with my first acquaintance with him, and his subsequent visit to the United States.

Previous to my acquaintance with Captain Ericsson, I had proposed to the President of the United States and the Navy Department to construct a steam ship of war, whose machinery should be entirely out of the reach of shot. Pursuing my inquiries on that subject a few years afterwards in England, I was informed by Mr. Francis B. Ogden, our consul at Liverpool, that a very ingenious mechanic by the name of Ericsson had been devoting much time and attention to the matter of submerged wheels. He afterwards introduced him to me. Subsequently I had constructed in England, under his immediate superintendence, an iron boat with the submerged wheels, and which boat was afterwards sent to the United States. I also had constructed, under his direction, an engine similar to the one now on board the Princeton, which was also sent to the United States.

Having obtained these two models, I took my leave of Captain Ericsson, not knowing that I should ever again see him, and not supposing that his personal services would be ever required or desired by me. I had the fullest confidence that all that I wished could be done quite as well by the mechanics in the United States as by Captain Ericsson. I had no idea that Captain Ericsson intended to come to the United States, until I received a letter from him announcing his arrival in New York. I have invariably given him to understand, in the most distinct manner, whenever the subject was alluded to, that I had no authority from the government to employ him, and that if he received anything, it would be altogether gratuitous on the part of the government; that considering the great opportunity that he as an inventor would have to introduce his patents to the world by the aid of the funds of the government, I did not think it proper for him to make a charge for their application to the Princeton; in all of which he has concurred, as far as I know, up to the time of the presentment of his extraordinary bill.

It appears, then, in the first place, that Captain Ericsson came to the United States without my invitation or approbation, and allow me further to add, much to my surprise and annoyance.

Having thus thrust himself upon me, and believing him at that time to be a mechanic of some skill, I did not employ him, but permitted him, as a particular act of favor and kindness, to superintend the construction of the machinery of the Princeton, on the success of which he had placed so much of his future hopes and expectations. Captain Ericsson himself considered, at the time he thus volunteered his services, that the opportunity afforded him to

exhibit to the world the importance of his various patents, would be a satisfactory remuneration for all his services in getting them up on so magnificent a scale.

In giving you this brief and general statement of my views on the subject of your letter of the tenth instant, I have endeavored to avoid everything not directly connected with the subject of your inquiry.

Your obedient and faithful servant,

R. F. STOCKTON.

REPORT

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the petition of John Kelly, right.

The petitioner, who is the widow of John Kelly, alleges that the gold medal due to her husband as an assistant signal officer while on duty. There is no record of such award; besides which the committee think that in every case of this nature referred to Congress, the previous action of the Department of the Interior, upon the medal money in the case, should be invoked by the applicant, that it may appear more distinctly in what respect the intervention of special legislation is required or proper.

The committee, therefore, ask to be discharged from the further consideration of the petition.

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In giving you this brief and general statement of my views on the subject of your letter of the 10th instant, I have endeavored to avoid everything not directly connected with the subject of your inquiry.

Your obedient and faithful servant,
R. F. STOCKTON

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